

SUBCHAPTER F—SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

PART 650—COMPLIANCE WITH NEPA

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Subpart A—Procedures for NRCS-Assisted Programs

AUTHORITY: 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.; Executive Order 11514 (Rev.); 16 U.S.C. 1001-1008; 7 U.S.C. 1010-1011; 16 U.S.C. 590 a-f, q.; 7 CFR 2.62, unless otherwise noted.

SOURCE: 44 FR 50579, Aug. 29, 1979, unless otherwise noted.

§ 650.1 Purpose.

(a) This rule prescribes procedures by which NRCS is to implement the provisions of NEPA. The Natural Resources Conservation Service recognizes NEPA as the national charter for protection, restoration, and enhancement of the human environment. NEPA establishes policy, sets goals (Section 101), and provides means (Section 102) for carrying out this policy.

(b) The procedures included in this rule supplement CEQ's NEPA regulations, 40 CFR parts 1500-1508. CEQ regulations that need no additional elaboration to address NRCS-assisted actions are not repeated in this rule, although the regulations are cited as references. The procedures include some overlap with CEQ regulations. This is done to highlight items of importance for NRCS. This does not supersede the existing body of NEPA regulations.

(c) These procedures provide that—

(1) Environmental information is to be available to citizens before decisions are made about actions that significantly affect the human environment;

(2) NRCS-assisted actions are to be supported to the extent possible by accurate scientific analyses that are technically acceptable to NRCS;

(3) NRCS-prepared NEPA documents are to be available for public scrutiny; and

(4) Documents are to concentrate on the issues that are timely and significant to the action in question rather than amassing needless detail.

(d) Procedures for implementing NEPA are designed to ensure that environmental consequences are considered in decisionmaking. They allow NRCS to assist individuals and nonfederal public entities to take actions that protect, enhance, and restore environmental quality.

(e) These procedures make possible the early identification of actions that have significant effects on the human environment to avoid delays in decisionmaking.

§ 650.2 Applicability.

This rule applies to all NRCS-assisted programs including the uninstalled parts of approved projects that are not covered by environmental documents prepared under previous rules for compliance with NEPA. It is effective on the date of publication of the final rule. NRCS is to consult with CEQ in the manner prescribed by 40 CFR 1506.11 if it is necessary to take emergency actions.